

APPENDIX L

Alternatives Considered but Not Recommended

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Some alternatives were eliminated early in the process because they were determined to be infeasible or did not meet the goals of the Solid Waste Facilities Master Plan. The following provides a description of some of the alternatives that were considered and the reasons why they are not being recommended.

Close the Existing Two City-Owned Transfer Stations

The City could close the Recycling and Disposal Stations and require that current station customers make other arrangements for recycling and disposal (e.g., with the private sector or other non-City facilities).

However, Seattle Public Utilities has a mandated responsibility to provide solid waste services for the City of Seattle, and part of that responsibility is to provide a place for people to drop off waste and recyclables. The two city Recycling and Disposal Stations receive a total of over 400,000 customer visits per year. Therefore, there is a clear demand for this service. Despite efforts to provide alternatives to the transfer stations, many customers rely on these facilities to dispose of their waste.

No comments were received recommending closure of either of the city-owned transfer stations without replacing them at another location. Although some people recommended relocating the north station, the majority commented that they liked where it currently is, and several people thought it was an amenity to the neighborhood and helped keep their part of town clean. Most customers surveyed at the stations indicated that they felt that they had no other practical alternative to using the stations and that the stations are very much needed.

Closing the stations is not in the public's interest and is likely to hurt the city economically. It could also lead to more illegal dumping and accumulation of solid waste in people's yards and lots. Residents and businesses depend on economical disposal options and the convenience of having a place to self-haul waste. Therefore, closing the stations was eliminated from further analysis.

Relocate Existing City-Owned Transfer Stations

SPU received several comments recommending the relocation of NRDS and reviewed alternative sites in northern Seattle for a transfer station. It was determined that a transfer station is needed in northern Seattle and simply eliminating the station would not be in the public's best interest. The SWFMP project manager reviewed several alternative sites recommended by residents. In addition, he met with the Ballard/Interbay/Northend/Industrial and Manufacturing Center (BINMIC) Action Committee to learn more about potential industrial sites that may be available for siting a solid waste transfer station. Industrial sites along the Ship Canal and Interbay area were visited. Also, sites close to Aurora Avenue North were visited. After reviewing a number of factors, including zoning, road access, parcel size, availability, cost, and proximity to other

uses, it was decided that no other sites were significantly better than the existing site that would warrant moving the facility.

SPU also received a few recommendations from individuals to relocate the South Recycling and Disposal Station if another site in southern Seattle could be found; however, no other suitable sites were recommended for review.

Rather than relocate the facilities, it was decided that the public would be better served by upgrading the facilities to minimize impacts on the local neighborhoods. This decision is in keeping with the majority of comments received from the public, which supported upgrading the facilities rather than moving them.

Direct All Collected Waste to Privately-Owned Transfer Stations

Directing all the collected waste to private transfer stations was also considered, but was not recommended. The private stations are faced with the same inefficiencies of the city-owned stations in that they are not located adjacent to the Union Pacific rail yard and therefore have to reload and transport the waste to the railhead. Inefficiencies would continue, such as being limited by road weight limits so container capacity cannot be maximized, duplicate container storage space is needed when the intermodal yard and transfer facilities are separate, compactor for intermodal container loading required at each transfer station, and other transfer inefficiencies.

Also, the private sector also lacks waste flow control; therefore, it is difficult for them to make investments into transfer station expansions or an intermodal facility because they can't guarantee a return on their investment without a guarantee they'll have the revenue from transferring the waste.

Also, relying on the private stations reduces the city's flexibility to bid competitive transportation and disposal options. This lack of competition would reduce the city's ability to obtain the best price and quality of services from potential service providers.

Extend Rail Line back Into the North Recycling and Disposal Station

The North Recycling and Disposal Station originally had rail access and restoring that access would provide a second method of transporting the waste out of that station. Remnants of the track can still be seen on North 34th and 35th streets. The site was served by a siding of the Burlington Northern Railroad Company extended north along a corridor to the east of Stone Way. The siding served the warehouses that line this corridor, but was abandoned in the 1980s due to lack of use. The rail line is now owned by the Ballard Terminal Railroad Company and now terminates around 8th Avenue North and 43rd Street. The railbed between the transfer station and the end of the line has been converted into the Burke Gilman Trail and a building was built in the middle of the alignment, making restoration of this segment very difficult. A building was recently built in the right-of-way and it would have to be demolished in order to re-establish the line or a new alignment and right-of-way would have to be developed around the building. Due to these changes, adding rail access to the transfer station would be very difficult and controversial.

Also, there are limitations with the Ballard Terminal Railroad. There is only enough room on their sidings to accommodate five rail cars, and the station could generate more waste than would fit on that amount of rail cars. Also, the Ballard Terminal Rail is tied to the

Burlington Northern/Santa Fe line and additional switching would be necessary to get the cars onto the Union Pacific line where Seattle's waste is currently shipped.

Based on these complications, this option was dropped from further consideration. It may still be possible to truck some recyclables to the Ballard Terminal Railroad from the transfer station for material markets accessible by rail, such as gypsum wallboard, scrap metals, and other large volume recyclables.

Develop an Intermodal Transfer Facility in Interbay

The Ballard/Interbay/Northend/Industrial and Manufacturing Center (BINMIC) Action Committee along with others recommended developing a solid waste transfer facility in Interbay, but it was decided that this was not the best location for such a facility. A siting study was performed to identify potential locations for an intermodal transfer station. This study is attached in Appendix F. None of the sites in Interbay were identified as top candidates, primarily because of access issues and other plans for the property that could conflict with the operation of a solid waste transfer station. The Port of Seattle's adopted Harbor Development Strategy calls for redevelopment of the Port's substantial holdings in Interbay. These plans include redevelopment of the 25 acre National Guard facility, which was one of the potential sites considered for a solid waste transfer facility. Also, private developers have acquired most of the properties with frontage along 15th Avenue West and are pursuing redevelopment.

Access to a large number of refuse collection trucks on a daily basis was also seen as problematic. Access routes are not conducive to directing collection trucks from other parts of the city to this location. In addition, most of the collection trucks are currently maintained and parked at the southern end of Seattle. Therefore, the trucks eventually drive south, favoring an intermodal transfer station at the southern side Seattle.

Also, Interbay is only served by Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) and the City would prefer to have the option of shipping waste by way of either BNSF or the Union Pacific Railroad in order to have more disposal options. Also, the Interbay rail yard is primarily used for locomotive fueling, rail car maintenance, and rail segment switching rather than container loading. A container loading area would need to be built in addition to a waste receiving and containerization facility.

Considering these factors, it was decided that locations in South Seattle are better suited for the siting of an intermodal solid waste transfer facility.

Relocate Aurora HHW to NRDS

Seattle Public Utilities evaluated the feasibility of relocating the Aurora Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facility to the North Recycling and Disposal Station (NRDS). Consolidating the two facilities at one location would make it easier to manage and staff the facilities and would provide a one-stop opportunity for customers with hazardous and non-hazardous household waste. Several comments were received at the public meeting recommending that the utility accept various types of household hazardous waste at NRDS.

A review of information relating to the original siting of the Aurora HHW revealed that there was a substantial amount of opposition to siting a HHW at NRDS. The local neighborhood was strongly opposed to a HHW at that location. Due to public opposition

and other factors, the HHW was sited to the north by NW 125th Street and Aurora Avenue North, where the City owns some industrial zoned property.

Another problem with siting a HHW at NRDS is the lack of space for such a facility. The existing Recycling and Disposal Station lacks space to accommodate a HHW facility. In fact, additional space is needed at NRDS just to accommodate existing operations. Current land use zoning would prohibit the development of a HHW on all adjacent property except the property immediately to the west and south. New office buildings were recently built on the property to the south; therefore, that property is not available to develop a HHW. The property to the west has some potential for redevelopment; however, the property owner has indicated that the property is not for sale and is currently leased to several active businesses. The added benefits of collocating the HHW at NRDS are not sufficient to warrant the expense and complications of condemning the property and relocating the existing businesses at this time.

The cost of relocating the HHW is expected to be relatively high. Property in the Fremont/Wallingford is more expensive than the existing site and additional funds would be necessary to acquire a site even if the existing site were sold. Also, much of the invested cost of the existing facility would be lost if it were relocated.

In conclusion, there is very limited land available of suitable zoning at or adjacent to NRDS to establish a HHW. In addition, there was strong public opposition to siting a HHW at that location in the past. Also, relocating the facility would be expensive. Considering these factors, developing a HHW at NRDS was not recommended.